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Acknowledging Participants in Research on Activism to End Violence Against Women, in Post Conflict Settings



Research Purpose

- ▶ Women's activism is a key influencer of policy and practice (Htun and Weldon 2012)
- ▶ Conceptualise women's activism in post conflict / divided societies
- ▶ Understand the impact of legacy of conflict and division on VAW activism and vice versa

Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative, feminist research
- ▶ Life history method
- ▶ 10 activists in each field site – Namibia and Northern Ireland

Aims of Today

- ▶ To give a flavour of the research and emerging themes
- ▶ To motivate the case for rethinking the social science convention of distorting the identify all life history participants - where possible, offer choice

Part 1 - Interesting Themes

- ▶ The nature of post conflict division
- ▶ The idea of culture as a coloniser of women
- ▶ The activism being pursued

“Culture is a neglected pathway
to women’s justice.”

Tamale (2008: 55)

Part 2 - Pseudonymity

- ▶ Pre interview, participants were asked to select a pseudonym
- ▶ Rosa – subjected to extensive public ridicule (Barcia, 2014) and support, as an activist for several decades. Why hide behind another name?

Pseudonymity

- ▶ Sarry – supported women to go public about their experiences of violence and abuse. Hiding her identity wouldn't feel right.

“how can you write about a person who does not exist?”



What to do?

Accepting Their Rationale

- ▶ The researcher was already aware of the need to carefully manage Rosa's data
- ▶ Both activists gave compelling reasons
- ▶ Remembered the unease, but acceptance, expressed by other participants

Other Research

- ▶ I wanted to accommodate participants wishes so researched to a revise ethical approach
- ▶ Grinyer (2009) – allowed choice because of distress experienced by participants
- ▶ Guenther (2009) – didn't allow choice based on concern it would harm participants

Problems with Pseudonymity

- ▶ Guenther (2009) concluded women could be recognised even with distorted names having put other research to the test
- ▶ When groups, places are involved, how do you effectively distort?
- ▶ Every datum can point to an identification

Process Consent

- ▶ Recommended by Smythe and Miller (2000)
- ▶ Check out every datum with every participant and pull content that does not meet with the participant's consent
- ▶ Not possible in this instance due to geography but of interest to researcher

The Outcome

- ▶ The Departmental Ethics Committee of the overseeing university approved variation in approach
- ▶ 5 out of 20 have chosen to use their own name
- ▶ Some Namibian participants need to be contacted

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